## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a structured composite material for accommodating passage of viscous fluids through the structured composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer having a first shrinkage extent, the first layer comprising a nonwoven web;

forming a second layer having a second shrinkage extent different from the first shrinkage extent, the second layer comprising a film and having openings through the second layer;

bonding the second layer to the first layer to form a composite material; and

shrinking ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer relative to the first layer, thereby forming ~~to produce the structured composite material having a pore size gradient in a z-direction wherein the first layer moves in a plane generally perpendicular to the composite material to form~~ a plurality of fiber loop pores in the first layer and ~~the second layer forms~~ shrinking the openings through the second layer to form a plurality of pores smaller than the fiber loop pores.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first layer comprises a propylene polymer and the second layer comprises an ethylene-propylene copolymer.

Claim 3 (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of heating the composite material to ~~affect~~ effect shrinkage of ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer.

5. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a structured composite material for accommodating passage of viscous fluids through the structured composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer having a first shrinkage extent;

forming a second layer having a second shrinkage extent different from the first shrinkage extent, the second layer comprising a film and having openings through the second layer;

bonding the second layer to the first layer to form a composite material;

creping the composite material; and

shrinking ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer relative to the first layer, thereby forming ~~to produce the structured composite material having a pore size gradient in a z-direction wherein the first layer moves in a plane generally perpendicular to the composite material to form~~ a plurality of fiber loop pores in the first layer and ~~the second layer forms~~ shrinking the openings through the second layer to form a plurality of pores smaller than the fiber loop pores.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a structured composite material for accommodating passage of viscous fluids through the structured composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer having a first shrinkage extent;

forming a second layer having a second shrinkage extent different from the first shrinkage extent and having openings through the second layer;

creping the first layer;

stabilizing the creped first layer by bonding the second layer to the first layer; and

shrinking ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer relative to the first layer, thereby forming ~~to produce the structured composite material having a pore size gradient in a z-direction wherein the first layer moves in a plane generally perpendicular to the composite material to form~~ a plurality of fiber loop pores in the first layer and ~~the second layer forms~~ shrinking the openings through the second layer to form a plurality of pores smaller than the fiber loop pores.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second layer is bonded to the first layer by one of thermal bonding, pin bonding and differential speed bonding.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of stretching the second layer before the second layer is bonded to the first layer.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the second layer is stretched in a machine direction to about 1.5 to about 6.0 times an initial length.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the second layer is stretched in a machine direction to about 2.0 to about 4.0 times an initial length.

Claims 11-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a composite material having a structure for accommodating passage of viscous fluids through the composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer having a first shrinkage extent, the first layer comprising a nonwoven web;

applying a second layer to the first layer to form the composite material, the second layer comprising a film, [[and]] having a second shrinkage extent different from the first shrinkage extent and having openings through the second layer; and

heating the composite material to produce the structure, wherein ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer shrinks[[,]] ~~the composite material having a pore size gradient in a z direction wherein the first layer moves in a plane generally perpendicular to the composite material to form~~ relative to the first layer, thereby forming a plurality of fiber loop pores in the first layer and ~~the second layer forms~~ shrinking the openings through the second layer to form a plurality of pores smaller than the fiber loop pores.

Claims 25 - 26 (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a composite material having a structure for accommodating passage of viscous fluids through the composite material, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer having a first shrinkage extent;

creping the first layer;

applying a second layer to the first layer to form the composite material, the second layer having a second shrinkage extent different from the first shrinkage extent and comprising a film and having openings through the second layer; and

heating the composite material to produce the structure, wherein ~~at least one of the first layer and~~ the second layer shrinks[[,]] ~~the composite material having a pore size gradient in a z-direction wherein the first layer moves in a plane generally perpendicular to the composite material to form~~ relative to the first layer, thereby forming a plurality of fiber loop pores in the first layer and ~~the second layer forms~~ shrinking the openings through the second layer to form a plurality of pores smaller than the fiber loop pores.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of stretching the second layer before the second layer is applied to the first layer.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of pattern embossing the first layer to form thermal bonds which extend through the first layer.

Claims 30 - 41 (Canceled)